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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 SANAA 000358

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR NEA, NEA/ARP, NEA/EX, S/CT

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TAGS: PTER ASEC PREL COUNTER TERRORISM

SUBJECT: COUNTERTERRORISM ACTION GROUP -- 10 FEBRUARY

MISSIONS' MEETING IN SANA'A, YEMEN

REF: SECSTATE 14279

11. (U) Summary: On 10 February 2004, the Ambassador hosted a meeting of the G-8 Counterterrorism Action Group (CTAG) local mission representatives at the Residence to discuss and coordinate member-nations' ongoing counterterrorism training and assistance efforts with the Republic of Yemen government (ROYG). Although there was great variance from country to country in the level of support and training, all members agreed that more needed to be done to bolster the ROYG's CT capabilities. For follow-up among members, The Ambassador noted the need for a coordination meeting for support to the Yemeni Coast Guard (YCG) and a future meeting with Minister of Interior Dr. Rashad Al-Alimi to discuss escorted travel, travel advisories and bureaucratic requirements for tourists.

Attendees included the ambassadors of France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Japan and the Deputy Chief of Mission of the Russian Federation. Action Recommended: Strong support for EU funding for CT in Yemen pursuant to request from European Ambssadors. (Para 13) End summary.

The CTAG

12. (U) The Ambassador opened the meeting by reviewing the purpose of the CTAG and informing the members that a capital-level CTAG meeting would be occurring in Washington later in the month. The Department had asked the Embassy to solicit mission-level input from other G-8 members for this 20 February meeting in order to provide focus based on combined assessments. The Ambassador proposed a round-table format where each member representative would discuss his country's security cooperation with the ROYG, explain assistance programs and identify outstanding needs. The Ambassador then briefed members on ROYG Foreign Minister Qirbi's recent visit to Washington and the positive response he received.

USG CT Assistance

13. (U) In briefly describing the Embassy's CT programs, the Ambassador told members that the first tranche of US-supplied Coast Guard boats would arrive on 14 February and likely become operational in mid-March. The Embassy also intended to soon begin work with appropriate ROYG security forces to counter the movement of weapons, WMD or unauthorized personnel across the borders. The Embassy had a program to work with police or other law enforcement personnel to provide training in anti-riot and community policing techniques. Finally, the Embassy would continue its training of ROYG military forces, to include the Central Security Force (CSF), Special Forces, the Yemeni Coast Guard and the Navy.

French CT Assistance

14. (U) The French Ambassador informed members of an early-March 2004 CG training assessment team that would conduct a survey as a prelude to further assistance. He added that a French Ministry of Interior (MOI) team would also arrive in that same period to conduct a similar survey among police units. This survey was the first step in a 5-year program budgeted for 2.5 million euros. The French wished to extend training from police units to the ROYG judiciary, with emphasis on the principle of "the rule of law." The French Ambassador expected that his Police Attach would arrive in April or May 2004.

15. (U) Concerning security assistance, He further explained that the French Embassy was in an "identification phase" and not yet operational. The French Ambassador expressed a desire to mobilize the European Union (EU) to engage them as a body to provide training and funding to the ROYG's CT efforts. He suggested that costs would be minimal and that the model of EU support for the Palestinian Authority could be used as precedent, which received support from all attendees. He suggested, and the Ambassador agreed, that the

U.S. could also assist in this matter at higher levels.

British CT Assistance

16. (U) The British Ambassador said that ongoing training assistance (joint with American troops) to the CSF would continue. Concerning the CG, in early February 2004 a marine engineering delegation made a 2-week visit to conduct a survey. The Royal National Lifeboat Institute would be conducting a survey in the near term. The British Embassy would also be sponsoring a visit by Judge Hamud Al-Hitar to the U.K. on 25 February to discuss the issue of creating a dialogue between government and Islamists. (Note: Hitar is the primary judicial representative involved in the ROYG's periodic release of detained extremists. End note.) The British Embassy has a program to work with members of the Political Security Organization (PSO) to promote methods of interrogation that increased efficiency without any use of torture.

Italian CT Assistance

17. (U) The Italian Ambassador briefed members that the technical issues surrounding Italian-supplied coastal radar systems had been resolved and installation of the system would begin in late 2004. The system is sophisticated and establishes linkages between local units and a central Sana'a station to complete coverage of all maritime traffic in the Bab Al-Mendab region. The Italian embassy was also pushing forward a draft cooperation agreement on international crime and terrorism, which the Italian Ambassador said was soon to be signed. The draft proposed formalizing a exchange of information at the MOI level between the two countries.

Japanese CT Assistance

18. (U) The Japanese Ambassador said that his embassy provided little CT training or support to the ROYG due to legal prohibitions. The majority of Japanese external military support was limited to humanitarian missions. Despite this, Tokyo was studying the issue of providing assistance to the Yemeni Coast Guard and had sponsored PSO attendance at an international terrorism investigation seminar in 2003.

German CT Assistance

19. (U) The German Ambassador briefed that, like Japan, Berlin's focus in Yemen is economic development and that there was a "good government" provision on military support. His embassy had been allotted one million dollars for "crisis prevention" training, but it was unclear how this money would be spent. Press reporting on a German-Yemeni security agreement was false.

10. (C) Confidentially, the German Ambassador informed members that through liaison with the MOI he had learned that the man arrested in December 2003 for stabbing foreigners in downtown Sana'a had been in possession of \$60,000. Through other sources, the ambassador said that this man had been in contact with two other Yemenis language students in Germany and that a man by the same name had unsuccessfully applied for a visa.

Russian CT Assistance

11. (U) The Russian DCM briefed members that although there was no formal security agreement, military support to the ROYG was very high and had increased dramatically over the last year. When queried, he admitted that the preponderance of this support was military sales, but added that it was subsidized and materiel was sold at cost. In the unspecified future, the Russian Federation would be sending a team to Hudaydah to repair a Russian-supplied naval ship. Additionally, Russia and the Ukraine would be fully equipping two mobile brigades, which were ostensibly tasked with the CT mission. This provisioning would include tanks and BMP-2 infantry fighting vehicles, as well as a standard suite of other weapons and equipment.

Dutch CT Assistance

12. (U) The Ambassador of the Netherlands said that his embassy provided no CT assistance to the ROYG. For the entire world, The Dutch Military Cooperation budget was only

21 million euros, down from 50 the previous year. He said he approached the ROYG to discuss possible CT assistance, but was told to concentrate on issues like health and education because there were other donor countries that were engaged on the CT issue.

¶13. (C) Action requested: Embassy recommends a strong US push for enhanced CT support to Yemen by the EU in the context of the US-EU dialogue in support of ongoing efforts by UK, French and other EU ambassadors in Sana'a.

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